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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela: draft resolution

Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

The General Assembly,

Recalling that all States have pledged themselves in the Charter of the United Nations to promote and encourage universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Reaffirming that discrimination against human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Recalling its resolution 47/129 of 18 December 1992, in which it requested the Commission on Human Rights to continue its consideration of measures to implement the Declaration,

Recalling also Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/25 of 5 March 1993, 1/

Reaffirming the call of the World Conference on Human Rights for all Governments to take all appropriate measures in compliance with their international obligations and with due regard to their respective legal systems to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief, including practices of discrimination against women and the desecration of religious sites, recognizing that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, expression and religion,

Recalling Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/17 of 21 February 1992 2/ and Economic and Social Council decision 1992/226 of 20 July 1992, by which the mandate of the Special Rapporteur appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world that are incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration and to recommend remedial measures as appropriate was extended for three years,

Welcoming the appointment of Mr. Abdelfattah Amor as Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, and calling on all Governments to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur to enable him to carry out his mandate fully,

Recognizing that it is desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and that both Governments and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in this domain,

Emphasizing that non-governmental organizations and religious bodies and groups at every level have an important role to play in the promotion of tolerance and the protection of freedom of religion or belief,

Conscious of the importance of education in ensuring tolerance of religion and belief,

Alarmed that serious instances, including acts of violence, of intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief occur in many parts of the world, as evidenced in the report of the former Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Angelo Vidal d'Almeida Ribeiro,

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1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 3 (E/1993/23), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Ibid., 1992, Supplement No. 2 (E/1992/22), chap. II, sect. A.

Reaffirming the dismay and condemnation expressed by the World Conference on Human Rights at the continued occurrence of gross and systematic violations and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of all human rights, including religious intolerance,

Believing that further efforts are therefore required to promote and protect the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and to eliminate all forms of hatred, intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief,

1. Reaffirms that freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is a human right derived from the inherent dignity of the human person and guaranteed to all without discrimination;

2. Urges States to ensure that their constitutional and legal systems provide full guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, including the provision of effective remedies where there is intolerance or discrimination based on religion or belief;

3. Recognizes that legislation alone is not enough to prevent violations of human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief;

4. Urges all States therefore to take all appropriate measures to combat hatred, intolerance and acts of violence, including those motivated by religious extremism, and to encourage understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief;

5. Also urges States to ensure that, in the course of their official duties, members of law enforcement bodies, civil servants, educators and other public officials respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate against persons professing other religions or beliefs;

6. Calls upon all States to recognize, as provided in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the right of all persons to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes;

7. Also calls upon all States in accordance with their national legislation to exert utmost efforts to ensure that religious places and shrines are fully respected and protected;

8. Considers it desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to this end in the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights;

9. Invites the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to the dissemination of the text of the Declaration, in all the official languages of the United Nations, and to take all appropriate measures to make the text available for use by the United Nations information centres, as well as by other interested bodies;

10. Encourages the continued efforts on the part of the Special Rapporteur appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world that are incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration and to recommend remedial measures as appropriate;

11. Encourages Governments to give serious consideration to inviting the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries so as to enable him to fulfil his mandate even more effectively;

12. Recommends that the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion be given appropriate priority in the work of the United Nations programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, including with regard to the drafting to basic legal texts in conformity with international instruments on human rights and taking into account the provisions of the Declaration;

13. Notes with interest the adoption by the Human Rights Committee of a general comment on article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 3/ dealing with freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

14. Welcomes the efforts of non-governmental organizations to promote the implementation of the Declaration;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to invite interested non-governmental organizations to consider what further role they could envisage playing in the implementation of the Declaration and in its dissemination in national and local languages;

16. Urges all States to consider disseminating the text of the Declaration in their respective national languages and to facilitate its dissemination in national and local languages;

17. Requests the Commission on Human Rights to continue its consideration of measures to implement the Declaration;

18. Decides to consider the question of the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance at its forty-ninth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

3/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.